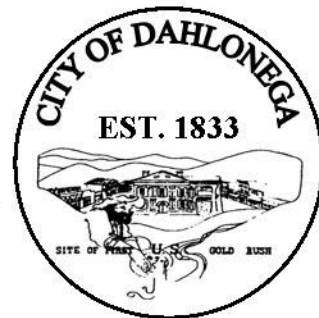


City Limits

News from the Government Offices of Dahlonega, Georgia

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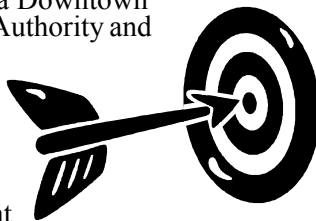
This newsletter is a collaborative project of the city of Dahlonega and Lumpkin County, designed to help citizens stay informed. Editor: Lee Ann Roy, Independent Writer

DDA and Partners Aim High

The Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority and the Better Hometown Program started 2007 fresh from an intensive planning retreat and ready to tackle an aggressive five year work plan. Director Joel Cordle and his staff of...well, Joel Cordle...relied on a network of community partners to set the agenda and will count on them to help accomplish the goals they've set. DDA/Better Hometown Program partners include the Dahlonega City Council, the city's Historic Preservation Commission, The Dahlonega Merchants Association, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce and others.

Joel says the first order of business was to reaffirm the mission of the DDA and Better Hometown Programs: to stimulate and sustain downtown economic development by encouraging cooperation and building leadership; by advancing a positive image of downtown and promoting it as an exciting place to live, shop and invest; by sustaining and improving the appearance of downtown and by strengthening and expanding its economic base. And the vision: that downtown Dahlonega will retain its role as the heart of the region and center for community and economic development. It will have an inviting appearance highlighted by historic architecture. It will enhance the civic, cultural and economic vitality of the entire community. And it will be a strong center for business, and an entertainment and learning destination.

Goals center on the functioning of the organization itself and on promotion of the downtown district, design issues and economic development concerns such as job creation and retention, improved property values, increased sales tax revenue and profitability. Specific tasks include producing a physical master plan of downtown and surrounding area, going after grants for streetscapes, focusing on business expansions and recruitment of the right mix of new businesses, and maintaining and preserving what's working.



City Audit "Excellent"

The city of Dahlonega again this year had an "excellent" audit, according to Edgar Land of Land & Associates, P.C., CPAs, who presented the 2006 audit report to council members at the February City Council meeting. The only flag raised concerned division of accounting activities among staff to safeguard against mishandling of funds and is a typical finding for smaller cities with limited staff, the auditor says. With accounting staff changes already made, that matter will probably not be an issue going forward. The auditor complimented Mayor Gary McCullough, the council, city manager and staff on the audit findings, concluding, "The city had had excellent year and it appears you're going into another excellent year."



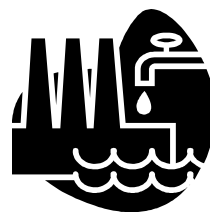
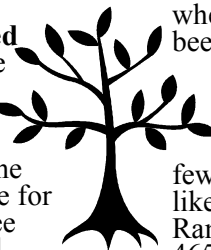
Lookin' Good!

The Dahlonega City Council and Downtown Development Authority recently recognized two building owners in downtown Dahlonega for their efforts to keep the city looking its best. In keeping with the city's commitment to ongoing downtown revitalization and historic preservation through the Better Hometown Program, Golden Nail Awards were presented to Jay Stone for exterior improvements to Hall's Block and to Roberta Green for enhancements to the exterior of the Butler Mini-Mall. Be sure to notice how spiffy these buildings are looking next time you visit Dahlonega's historic Public Square.



Arbor Day Tree Planted

Special thanks to Wallace Landscape Group, which contracts with the city to help keep Dahlonega's streetscapes beautiful. The company donated the tree for this year's Arbor Day tree planting. City leaders and friends gathered Feb. 16 at the Yahoola Creek Reservoir to see the tree go into the ground.

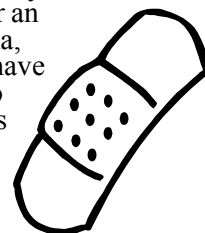


Waterworks: Getting to the Task at Hand

Even though some issues still need to be resolved along Dahlonega's complicated road to a new water treatment plant and delivery system, the city has given project engineers the go-ahead. The City Council in January approved a task order allowing Jordan, Jones and Gouling to move forward with the design, permitting and bidding for construction of the new water plant. The design phase costs are estimated at about \$1.2 million. Although there are some calculated risks associated with the council's decision to get going on the project, the alternative—waiting—could result in major cost increases and critical supply problems down the line. There are potential penalties for not exercising bids by certain dates, and costs for construction materials like steel and concrete continue to rise, explains city manager Bill Lewis, so delaying the project further could put it significantly over budget. Besides that, Lewis says, the plant is going to take three years to complete. Whether the existing treatment plant's capacity will meet the demand for even that long is already a concern, and the city hopes to avoid a water supply shortage that would limit positive growth and development while waiting for the new plant to come on line.

Get Well Soon, Randy

After many years of service to the Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority and to the Dahlonega/Lumpkin County community as a business leader and volunteer, Randy Harvey decided to start an exciting new chapter in his life. He resigned from the DDA in December and just as he and his wife Jean were about to announce their plans, Randy became ill and had to be hospitalized for an extended time in Alabama, where family members have been nursing him back to health. Many prayers and get well wishes have gone out to Randy over the past few months. If you'd like to send a card or note, please send it to Randy Harvey, c/o Dahlonega City Hall, 465 Riley Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533. The city will forward your words of encouragement to the family.



City of Dahlonega . . . continued from reverse side

From Iceland to Greenland



Hancock Park was transformed into a winter wonderland when an ice skating rink was installed

there over the Christmas holidays. When the rink was packed up in mid-January, it left an empty place in skaters' hearts—and a big expanse of bare earth where once green space had been. A new carpet of grass should be ready for bare feet and cartwheels by mid-Spring, and the park will be no worse for the wear. In fact, it will be better than ever, as the city took advantage of the opportunity to repair some low-lying areas where drainage had been a problem.

And about that skating rink: the Chamber of Commerce, the city of Dahlonega and the Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority—who provided funding support for the project—were pleased with the economic impact. It was a promotional dream that took Dahlonega's marketing message to local, regional and national audiences. Many merchants reported sales numbers up 15% to 25% over last holiday season. And finally, the intangibles were just as rewarding, like seeing all the various public and private community partners working together toward a common goal. "It was a huge undertaking," says chamber president Dale Steenbergen, who says it couldn't have been done if the city employees had not gone above and beyond the call of duty to accomplish it, or without the school groups and civic clubs and the many, many volunteers and sponsors. Dale estimates as many as 8,000 people ice skated in Dahlonega this winter, including more than 600 children who couldn't have afforded to go if not for the free passes they received.

Parking Cars and Pumping...Iron?

Providing ample parking has been a challenge for downtown Dahlonega and for North Georgia College & State University for as long as many people remember. A cooperative project under construction now on the NGCSU campus will bring much needed relief to students, faculty and tourists. Here's how the project is shaping up.

NGCSU students voted in favor of collecting additional student fees to pay for a new 586-space parking deck on campus, which will also feature a fantastic 54,000 square foot recreation center on the upper floors to replace the existing campus gymnasium. The attractively designed structure will be tucked into a low-lying area behind the NGCSU student



center, the Holly Theatre and The Smith House that was already being used for parking. Project financing was made possible through a partner-ship

between students, the NGCSU Foundation and the Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority. The DDA issued about \$30 million in revenue bonds, allowing the foundation to build the facility now and make the bond payments over time with new student fees as they are collected.

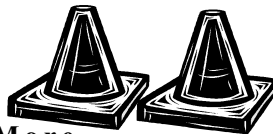
In addition to serving campus needs, this important expansion project will increase the number of parking spaces available to visitors and downtown merchants and employees during Dahlonega's major festivals, as the deck will be open to the public for use nights and weekends, when commuting students don't need it.



Road Work Ahead

Keep your eyes on the road. The

Georgia Department of Transportation will be milling the roadways on Highways 60 and 52 this spring or early summer. Milling, which removes the top layer of asphalt to extend the life of the road until the next re-paving, is intended to span the gap between routine maintenance and costly road improvement projects. The DOT also will be re-doing the handicapped access ramps in their rights-of-way. The city plans to "piggy back" on that contract in order to have all the city's ramps re-ramped at the same time, a plan that will save the city some money.



More Road Work Ahead?

Ahh, Spring . . . a sure sign city leaders soon will visit the DOT commissioner in Atlanta to lobby for funds to resurface city streets. The city used to rely solely on the state's Local Assistance Road Project (LARP) funds, but wasn't getting enough mileage from its roads program. A new strategy has worked better. The city invests about \$100,000 of local money, and requests—in person—matching DOT funds. More miles of road were improved in the past two years than had been for a number of years before that. So, while some city streets still need resurfacing, the need for street improvements isn't nearly as dire as it once was.

How May We Be of Service ?



Question? Comment? Problem? Call City Hall at (706) 864-6133. We'll put you in touch with the right person.

City Council

Gary McCullough, Mayor
Michael Clemons
Guy Laboa
Gerald Lord
Sam Norton
Terry Peters
Bill Scott

Bill Lewis, City Manager

Please join us at our meetings!

Learn about your government by attending public meetings like these. Find the complete schedule at www.cityofdahlonega.com.

City Council: 1st Monday of each month at 6pm—City Hall

Planning/Zoning Commission: 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm—City Hall

Historic Preservation

Commission: 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6pm—City Hall

Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority: 3rd Thursday of each month at 9am—City Hall

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